

**An introductory address, delivered to the students of the Medical College of Ohio, November 3, 1847 / by John P. Harrison.**

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*Harrison (J. P.)*  
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INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS,

DELIVERED TO

THE STUDENTS OF THE

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF OHIO,

NOVEMBER 3, 1847,

BY JOHN P. HARRISON, M. D.,

PROFESSOR OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE.

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1847.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
MEDICAL COLLEGE OF OHIO,  
AT CINCINNATI, OHIO,  
JANUARY 18, 1887.

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF OHIO.

BY JOHN F. HARRISON, M.D.

PROFESSOR OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE.

CINCINNATI:  
COLLIER & VAN WAGEN, PRINTERS.

DEPOT OF MEDICAL AND SURGICAL ARTS.

1887.

CINCINNATI, NOVEMBER 16th, 1847.

At a meeting of the Students of the Medical College of Ohio, held in the College Edifice, Mr. Wm. Guthrie was called to the Chair, and Mr. George Watt, appointed Secretary, when, on motion, the following gentlemen, viz: L. W. Bishop, D. B. Collins, R. H. Ewing, W. H. Smiley, and J. Shank, were appointed a committee to wait upon Professor Harrison, and request a copy of his Introductory for publication.

Adjourned.

WM. GUTHRIE, *Chairman.*

GEORGE WATT, *Secretary.*

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### CORRESPONDENCE.

MEDICAL COLLEGE, NOVEMBER 17th, 1847.

PROF. HARRISON—DEAR SIR:—The members of the Medical Class, and others, having been highly gratified by your very instructive Lecture, delivered at the College on the evening of November 3rd, do, through us, their committee, respectfully solicit a copy for publication. With much esteem, yours, &c.,

L. W. BISHOP, D. B. COLLINS, R. H. EWING, W. H. SMILEY, J. SHANK,	}	Committee.
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RACE AND FOURTH STREETS.

GENTLEMEN:—Agreeably to your polite request, I deliver you my Introductory for publication. I trust that its circulation may, in some degree, contribute to the advancement of the great interests of that profession, so noble in its objects, so elevating in its studies, and so purifying in its moral influences, to which we have devoted our lives. Very respectfully, Yours, &c.,

JOHN P. HARRISON.

MESSRS. BISHOP, COLLINS, EWING, SMILEY, SHANK,	}	Committee.
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CHICAGO, November 16th, 1847.

At a meeting of the Students of the Medical College of Ohio held in the College Building, Mr. Wm. G. G. was called to the Chair, and Mr. George Watt, appointed Secretary, when, on motion, the following gentlemen, viz: J. W. Bishop, D. B. Collins, R. H. Ewing, W. H. Emley, and J. Frank, were appointed a committee to wait upon Professor Harrison, and request a copy of his Treatise, for publication.

Wm. G. G. Chairman.

GEORGE WATT, Secretary.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

Medical College, November 17th, 1847.

Dear Sir:—The members of the Medical Class, and others, having been highly gratified by your very instructive lecture delivered at the College on the evening of November 3rd, and through me, their committee, respectfully request a copy for publication. With much esteem, yours, &c.

J. W. BISHOP,  
D. B. COLLINS,  
R. H. EWING,  
W. H. EMLEY,  
J. FRANK,  
Committee.

Learn and Foster System.

Dear Sir:—Pardon me for not having before this delivered you my letter in reply to your letter of the 10th inst. I trust that the circulation may be made before the publication of the great interests of that profession, so noble in its object, in relation to its studies, and so purifying in its moral influence, to which we have devoted our lives. Very respectfully, Yours, &c.

JOHN P. HARRISON.

ALBANY, N.Y.  
J. W. BISHOP,  
D. B. COLLINS,  
R. H. EWING,  
W. H. EMLEY,  
J. FRANK,  
Committee.

STATE AND PROSPECTS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.  
AN INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,  
DELIVERED NOVEMBER 3RD, 1847, BY JOHN P. HARRISON, M. D.,  
*Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine, in the  
Medical College of Ohio.*

AMIDST the busy throng, each intent upon the prosecution of his own designs of industry and accumulation, there exists a separate body of men, whose purpose is the preservation of the health of the community. The medical profession is isolated from the great mass of their fellow citizens, in the special and peculiar functions of their vocation. And yet, physicians bear about them no charmed existence, for although it is their high and honorable task, to stand in a protective position to ward off from Society the mortal ills incident to the body's frailty, they are equally with others, subject to the great law of mortality.

This universal subjection of human nature to disease, renders the profession of Medicine necessary in all well ordered, civilized communities. Man is liable to sickness,—man is, therefore, subject to medical control. Man everywhere, in all stages of his social progress,—amidst the degradation and darkness of his savage life, and in the pride and pomp of a luxurious civilization,—demands, in ruder or more refined forms, the interposition of the art of healing. From the superstitious practices of the untutored "Medicine Man" among our aborigines, to the scientific measures of cure employed by the cultivated Physician among a christian people, there is constantly at work, in a thousand ways, the resources of mitigation and of removal, for the numerous maladies which harrass, embitter, and shorten life. The ratio of sickness in any Society, must vary with a variation of external circumstances. Among savage tribes, there is little disease. Sparseness of population, fewness of luxuries, and hardihood of constitution, ward off numerous maladies that infest a thickly populated country—in which a refined and complex scheme of existence has enervated the frame of man, and rendered it susceptible to the injurious action of the various agents which incessantly operate upon the powers of life.

But whilst civilization has multiplied the inlets to disease, and enlarged the surface of exposure to the impressions which generate pain, it has conjured up a strong array of means to arrest the progress of the evils incidently engendered by its multiplication of physical indulgences, and of mental and social delights. The science of Medicine, commencing with the earliest dawn of civilization, has gone on with the advance of intellectual and moral culture, till it has attained its present elevated rank among those branches of human knowledge which reflect glory on our age, and conduce to the happiness of mankind.

Thus the medical profession, august and dignified for its antiquity, mighty in its sway over the earthly destiny of man, and attractive and amiable for its many deeds of benevolence, presents to the eye of observation four distinct, and yet harmoniously blended, aspects.

First, the intellectual character which it possesses: Second, its economic condition, or the state of medical practitioners in reference to worldly circumstances: Third, the social respect and consideration in which

society holds the profession: and Fourth, the moral elevation maintained by Physicians in their secular matters, and professional connections.

The intellectual character of the profession is shown in the literature of Medicine, and in the attainments, general and technical, possessed by living Physicians. In the works of our profession the most ample and diversified evidences are afforded, of a rich and varied intellectual culture. The pages of Boerhave, Haller, Linneus, Gregory, Cullen, Pott, Good, and numerous other medical writers, attest to the truth of our declaration. Nor have the illustrious dead of American Medicine been deficient in their devotion to literature, or failed in leaving behind them contributions to the great cause of human knowledge. Ramsay, Rush, Wistar, Hosack, Barton, Forry, Eberle, Godman, and other distinguished physicians, whose lives were devoted to deeds of active benevolence, and whose memories are hallowed by the recollections of many whom their skill saved from a premature grave, shine with glorious lustre in the firmament of American Medicine.

But what is the present state and prospects of our profession, as regards its intellectual character? Is it stationary, or has it retrograded, or advanced? Are there patent, substantial proofs, that the present race of medical practitioners are the legitimate offspring of the illustrious men who have preceded them, and whose names stand conspicuously enrolled upon the annals of history? There are three points of view in which the mental culture of the profession may be considered. In the first place, we should advert to the preliminary education of medical students. In the second place, inquire into the extent and kind of attainments made necessary to graduation. And lastly, endeavor to ascertain the advancement made by practitioners, in professional knowledge.

Two questions meet us, respecting the preliminary scholarship of young gentlemen desirous of studying medicine. The one is, what is the maximum of acquirements proper to constitute a due preparation for the study of medical science. The other question is, what is the absolute minimum of scholastic training which a wise judgment would barely tolerate in a young man about to enter upon the prosecution of the study of medicine.

On the one hand, it is urged that the dignity and respectability of the profession are compromised by lowering the requisition of previous discipline and instruction, and therefore it behooves all who hold dear the exalted position which the science of medicine should occupy among the educated and refined portion of society, not to abate in the smallest degree, the standard of preliminary education. On the other side, we find distinguished individuals in the profession, who contend that to insist upon a very exalted grade of preparation, the inevitable result would be the prevention of many worthy and moderately gifted young men, in restricted circumstances, entering the regular profession. It is clear, that if the question of abstract excellence were the one to be solved, that if we were called upon to decide, not simply what is practicable, but what is most approximative of ideal perfection, we should unhesitatingly declare, that the preparatory education of medical students should partake of the most varied, and thorough, and comprehensive scholarship, which the most elaborate system of protracted college exercises could confer.

Let every young man who intends to prosecute the study of medicine, acquire as much classical learning as his opportunities will permit. There is not the remotest danger to be apprehended that his mental powers will ever be encumbered, or his future professional knowledge at all embarrassed, by the amount and accuracy of his Greek and Latin, and mathematical acquirements. There is no physician in our country that suffers damage to his intellect or reputation, by too much classical learning.—Many distinguished men among our ranks possess fine literary tastes, and

they have never regretted that they "drank deep of the Pierian Spring," or that their "lips were wet with Castalian dews."

A thorough scholastic training of the faculties subserves four important ends. First, it affords a praxis, or method of mental action, which greatly facilitates the faculties in their future search after truth. Second, by such early discipline, the mind is trained and accustomed to patient inquiry. Third, by familiarity with the highest examples of literary excellence, the fervor of the soul is kindled to an emulous exertion of its best capabilities. And fourth, by a knowledge of the dead languages, the medical student has a key put into his hand, by which he may unlock the vocabulary of the science, with a quick and pleasing facility.

Although we urge these advantages of a classical education, we would not erect the dead languages into an exclusive standard of preparation for the study of medicine. The German and French tongues confer greater benefits on the modern physician than the ancient languages; for there is a vast mass of the most valuable contributions to medicine, and the auxiliary sciences, in these highly polished languages. Still the study of the French and German does not so discipline and invigorate the intellect as a classical education.

Aside from the higher preparation afforded by classical erudition, for the study of medical science, there is one point on which every educated, enlightened physician will concur in opinion. All strenuously contend for a good English education. All agree that no medical student should be ignorant of his vernacular speech, his mother tongue. That he shall be able not only to give articulate utterance to his ideas in well selected, grammatically constructed, and correctly pronounced, English, but that the student be capable of communicating his ideas in a scholarly way through written composition. Besides, in our conception of an English education is included an acquaintance with the lower branches of the mathematics, a thorough acquaintance with arithmetic, and some familiarity with the rules of logic.

There is an obvious improvement in elementary education in the profession, within a few years. A still more enlarged scheme of preparatory instruction would confer great advantages upon us; would quicken our march along the road of professional knowledge; elevate the tone of mental and moral excellence; and attract toward our ranks many gifted minds, that glow with honorable emulation after the rewards of an activity devoted to the good of mankind.

The second feature of the intellectual aspect of the medical profession is seen in the extent and variety of scientific attainments possessed by physicians. A wide scope of intellectual effort is presented in the science of medicine. The spirit of the age, the wants of the sick, and the honor of the profession, call for a full consecration of the highest powers of the mind in this field of labor. Whilst all around is full of life, and the buoyancy of onward movement, shall medicine remain a stagnant collection of antiquated notions? Whilst renovation is awakening into new forms of existence, all departments of human effort, shall physicians not "pursue the triumph and partake the gale?"

In no portion of the medical world is there a larger amount of sound practical sagacity exhibited in the employment of remedial resources, than is shown by American physicians. Much disparagement has been vainly attempted of our medical practitioners, by ignorant opponents of the regular profession, because in cases of severe illness reliance is placed on heroic remedies. There are simplicity and earnestness, and directness, in the measures of clinical interference, brought to bear in severe attacks of sickness, which partake of our national character, and reflect glory upon the beneficent control of the healing art. The American physician

feels, when summoned to the bed-side of a suffering fellow being, that his profession is not a mockery and a lie. No! he is assured that nature, oppressed and crippled in her energies, is incompetent to the task of her own rescue from the load of disease which presses upon her, and that art, enlightened by science and guided by philanthropy, must come to her deliverance. Let the mere naturalist physician practice his expectant plan of non-resistance to morbid action at the bedside, and day by day visit his unhappy patient, to note down the varying symptoms, and speculate on the probabilities of endurance on the part of nature to withstand the ravages of disease—and then smile at the credulous reliance of the sick man on his do-nothing course. This cold, and cruel, calculation of the powers of nature, may well comport with a selfish and sceptical turn of mind, which fits its possessor to be an indifferent spectator of the unassisted woes of other men, provided private advantage may be gained.—But the plain, straight-forward path of the decided and prompt physician, whose heart sympathises with the afflictions of his patients, leads to a far different goal. Having studied his profession well; having made himself master of the principles of medical science, and been thoroughly instructed in the best therapeutic resources, the conscientious, efficient man of physic goes to work in earnest, and leaves no means untried which a sound experience warrants for the delivery of his patient from the sufferings and peril of a violent seizure of disease. Decisive measures of medication constitute true economy in attacks of sickness. They save the patient from sufferings endured in a protracted struggle of nature with disease, and thus evince true, practical benevolence. They save that time which would be consumed in the slow restoration of the sick, when left to the tardy, uninterrupted agency of nature. And they often save a patient from some lingering, perhaps incurable, form of chronic disease, which is so apt to follow acute attacks that are not controlled by judicious medication. Doubtless energetic methods of cure may be pushed too far—they may be abused by ignorant presumption—but surely the abuse of a valuable thing is no legitimate argument against the thing itself, in the correct applications of its influence. The very existence of a capability of useful application of any of the powers of nature, or of art, evinces at the same time, and to the same extent of action, a liability of abuse springing from a misapplication, grounded on ignorance and presumption.

There is an obvious improvement in the regular medical profession, within the last twenty years, in these very interesting and important points. There is an augmented spirit of generous emulation abroad in the whole body. There is an increase of professional reading. And there is a more decided independence of mind manifested towards the entertainment of any universal system of doctrine, and exclusive scheme of therapeutics.

As the result of these important meliorations, our profession is gaining every year in intellectual and moral power. It is acquiring a gradual increment of internal force, and revealing, by fresh developements, clearer demonstrations of usefulness.

As to the economic state of the profession, it is far from being forlorn. Let our croaking, discontented, splenetic malcontents say what they may about "neglected merit," "impostures of quackery," and "shameful ingratitude in the public," still as a body we are not so badly provided for, nor so depressed by low living as to be incapable of lifting up our heads in society, or of mingling in social circles with the cultivated walks of life. It is all a mistake, that in our highly favored country, real merit in the medical profession is not discovered, and liberally rewarded. It would be a blot, a foul stain on the fair reputation of our land, to witness the degradation of as enlightened and humane a body of citizens, of which, as we

feel assured, the medical profession is constituted; and that physician reflects discredit on his country, who allows his mind to reach such "a retrograde conclusion and sad mistake" as to imagine that he belongs to a class of men who are tabooed by the public, and given over, by an evia destiny, to poverty, disparagement, and aversion. Never have we known an enlightened, virtuous physician fail in arriving at a good support, if not wealth, in his profession, where he adhered to three rules of conduct.—First, not to abandon his profession for another pursuit, but to persevere in a strict devotement to its duties. Second, to settle in an appropriate place, and there remain, till some very urgent considerations induce a removal.—Third, to live peaceably with all men, especially with his professional brethren. Observant of these three rules, success, sooner or later, will crown his professional career. But the physician, to succeed, must be well imbued with medical knowledge, be devoted to his calling, and not be debased by vice, nor alienate the kind regards of his fellow citizens by eccentric or offensive manners. The medical practitioner, in all parts of our common country, is held in high esteem; his presence is greeted by the most cultivated portion of society, and by proper attention to his own private affairs, he will never sink into destitution, but will gradually attain to competency, if not opulence.

Let us, therefore, ever abide satisfied with our profession, always entertain a manly, cheerful, active frame of mind; repress the risings of discontent; rebuke with the spirit of philosophy, the idle musings of selfish sentimentalism, and cherish, from hour to hour, a filial trust in the guardian care of that Supreme Father, who directs all events to the furtherance of man's highest moral interests, when we do not prove recreant to the solemn trusts put into our keeping.

The moral character of the profession has undergone, within the last thirty years, as personal observations have assured us, a great and happy improvement. Scepticism, and even declared infidelity, were at that period not uncommon; the doctrines of materialism, as taught by Darwin and Priestly, were very generally relied upon as the true theory of the soul, and drunkenness was hardly a discreditable matter. Now, a firm religious faith is very frequently witnessed among physicians; an avowed disbelief of the christian religion, is rare, and the degrading habit of inebriation, which brings discredit upon the standing of any man in society, is seldom found among medical practitioners. It is, on the contrary, a high and honorable distinction, won by the profession in the temperance reform, that this great and noble cause has been most essentially aided by the personal example and professional efforts of physicians.

The prospects opened up to the contemplative mind, by the recent movements in the medical profession of the United States, are of the most cheering and exciting character. Among the most auspicious of these movements is the National Medical Convention, first held in New York in May, 1846, and in Philadelphia in May, 1847. At this last place, there were in attendance two hundred and thirty-three members, representing twenty-three States of the Union—fourteen Southern and Western, and nine Northern, Middle, and Eastern. Twenty-eight out of the thirty-seven medical schools of the United States, sent delegates, and sixteen State, seventeen county, and eight city, medical societies, were represented. This Convention has been justly described in the recent Circular of the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania, in the following words: "It is believed, in relation to its numbers, and the standing of its individual members, the late Convention has never been equalled by any assemblage of medical men on the continent. The recommendations of such a body are entitled to the highest respect; and though it may not be practicable to carry them immediately into full effect, yet as they have

the general good only in view, it would appear incumbent on all, to enter into their spirit, and by cordial efforts to prepare the way for the ultimate attainment of their object."

Governed by a warm solicitude to promote the laudable purposes which led to the formation, and which actuated the doings, of the National Medical Convention, we shall endeavor to give an abstract of their proceedings.

After various topics of discussion were disposed of, the Convention resolved itself into a National Medical Association, to meet annually, the place of meeting never to be the same for any two years in succession.—**DELEGATES**, from Medical Societies, Medical Colleges, Hospitals, Lunatic Asylums, and other permanently organized Medical Institutions of good standing, in the United States, are entitled to membership. **MEMBERS BY INVITATION**, are to receive their appointment by special invitation, and **PERMANENT MEMBERS** are to consist of those who have previously served in the capacity of Delegates. There are, a President, four Vice Presidents, two Secretaries, and a Treasurer, with eight standing committees—viz: 1, on Arrangements; 2, on Medical Societies; 3, on Practical Medicine; 4, on Surgery; 5, on Obstetrics; 6, on Medical Education; 7, on Medical Literature; 8, on Publication. The venerable and illustrious Prof. Chapman, was elected President, who, upon taking the Chair, made the following remarks, which we select from the report given of his short and glowing speech: "He loved his profession, and should be ungrateful if he did not; whatever he possessed in this life, had been bestowed by its favors; when he forgot it, or deserted it, or its disciples, he remarked with great emphasis, may Almighty God forget and desert me." Among the most prominent topics discussed and acted upon by this dignified body, were the following: the Preliminary Education of Medical Students; Standard of requirement for the Degree of M. D.; Code of Medical Ethics; the Union of Teaching and Licensing in Medicine; and the Registration of Births, Marriages, and Deaths.

Great ability, discretion, and discrimination, mark the Reports made upon the above named subjects, and the disposal of the interesting questions involved was characterized by much calmness, decision, and moderation. The Convention proceeded with a prudent yet firm determination toward the pregnant and momentous issues debated. We shall, as briefly as possible, sum up the conclusions at which they arrived. And first, in reference to medical education, the following points were decided on:

"That practitioners should satisfy themselves before receiving young men into their offices as students, that they are of a good moral character, and that they have acquired a good English education, a knowledge of Natural Philosophy, and the Elementary Mathematic Sciences, including Geometry and Algebra; and such an acquaintance, at least, with the Greek and Latin languages, as will enable them to appreciate the technical language of Medicine, and read and write prescriptions."

"That it be required of candidates for the degree of M. D., that they have *steadily* devoted three months to dissection."

"That it is incumbent upon Perceptors to avail themselves of every opportunity to impart clinical instruction to their pupils, and upon Medical Colleges, to require candidates for graduation to show that they have attended upon Hospital practice for one session, wherever it can be accomplished, for the advancement of the same end."

"That the Faculties of the various Medical Institutions of the country adopt some efficient means for ascertaining that their students are actually in attendance upon their lectures."

"That it be recommended to all the Colleges to extend the period employed in lecturing, from four, to six months."

"That no student shall become a candidate for the degree of M. D., unless he shall have devoted three entire years to the study of medicine, including the time allotted to attendance upon the lectures."

"That the candidate shall have attended two full courses of lectures, that he shall be twenty one years of age, and in all cases shall produce the certificate of his preceptor, to prove when he commenced his studies."

"That the certificate of no preceptor shall be received, who is avowedly and notoriously an irregular practitioner, whether he shall have the degree of M. D. or not."

"That the following branches of medical education be taught in all the Colleges: on the Theory and Practice of Medicine; on the principles and Practice of Surgery; General and Special Anatomy; Physiology and Pathology; Materia Medica; Therapeutics and Pharmacy; Midwifery and Diseases of Women and Children; Chemistry and Medical Jurisprudence; and that the number of Professors be increased to seven."

Besides the above recommendations the Convention urges upon regular Medical practitioners "to patronise no druggist or apothecary who deals in patent or secret remedies."

The National Medical Association will meet on the *first Tuesday* of May, 1848, in Baltimore, at which time there will be reports from the following Committees. 1st, on Medical Science: 2d, on Practical Medicine; 3rd, on Surgery: 4th, on Obstetrics: 5th on Medical Literature; 6th, on Medical Education; 7th, on Indigenous Botany.

Dr. Dixon, late of Charleston S. C., now of the University of New York, is Chairman of the Committee on Medical Sciences; Dr. J. M. Smith of N. Y. is Chairman of the committee on Practical Medicine; Dr. G. W. Norris of Philadelphia, of Surgery; Dr. H. Linsey D. C. of Obstetrics; Dr. D. W. Holmes, Boston, of Medical Literature; Dr. A. H. Stevens N. Y. of Medical Education; and Dr. N. S. Davis, Binghamton, N. Y. is Chairman of the Committee on Indigenous Botany.

From the elevated position occupied by these gentlemen, very elaborate reports, fully sustaining their reputation, may be expected, on the respective subjects assigned them. The next meeting of the National Medical Association will be of great importance to the interests of Medical Science in our country. We confidently trust that its deliberations will be conducted in the spirit of an enlightened liberality, and that from it may emanate a moral influence that shall pervade the whole body of our profession, and which may eminently conduce to the advancement of American Medicine, and to the harmony and usefulness of its members. There are two very important views to be taken of the next meeting of the National Medical Association. One is, the members which shall compose it; and the other, the topics to be brought before them.

The delegates will represent Medical Societies, Medical Colleges, Hospitals, Lunatic Asylums, and other permanently organized Medical Institutions of good standing, in the United States. By other permanently organized medical institutions is no doubt to be understood, medical conventions, which meet from year to year. This then, is the comprehensive system of union by representation of our profession in this country. The inferior, or represented bodies, are most generally, established by distinct and special acts of legislation, in the States to which they respectively belong. But the Supreme, or representative body is but an advisory assembly—with no special franchises, and incapable of exerting any other than a moral power over the bodies represented, and over the entire profession, thus virtually represented in the congregation of its members. In order to the exertion of the complete moral influence of the National Medical Association, the represented bodies should, in the spirit of great kindness and deference, receive the suggestions and admonitions of their represen-

tatives. To do this, several questions of some gravity should be disposed of in the most amicable manner. First, to what extent is it practicable to proceed in the introduction of new measures, or in the enlargement of the already established customs of our Medical Colleges? Second, how far can we take the European Schools of Medical instruction as our guide in matters pertaining to professional education in this country? And third, as there is no distinction made in our country between surgeons, physicians, and obstetricians, and as American practitioners have to act as their own apothecaries, except in our cities, can we be regulated by the same rules in conferring the degree of M. D. that govern the French, German, or English institutions?

We leave the adjustment of these, and kindred subjects, to the sound practical wisdom, and enlightened prudence, of the next, and succeeding National Medical Associations. And now we would invite your attention to three points, before we close this address; 1st, the formation of Medical Societies, and the benign action which they will exert upon the profession; 2nd, the increase of medical schools; 3rd, the number and character of Medical publications.

Medical Societies afford in every aspect, a pleasing exhibition, and most useful exemplification, of the liberal spirit, and benevolent character, of medicine. For men to meet together in kindly association, that they may indulge the flow of social feelings, and reciprocate the pleasure which springs from intellectual communion, attests the superior nature of our being, and illustrates the goodness of God in our creation. But when there is superadded to social delights, the higher ends of mental improvement, or of moral progress, there opens before us a more beautiful and attractive aspect, to win our approval and fix our fondest sympathy. If to these inducements there is still further superadded a more disinterested motive for association; if to the pleasures of social intercourse, and to the intellectual and moral benefit conferred, there is added the desire to acquire knowledge, not to gratify our own curiosity, but to bless others—to gain that information which shall direct us in the arduous duties which await us as medical practitioners—then do Medical Societies stand before us arrayed in the varied attitude of attractions drawn from these several sources.

From one end of the land to the other—from east to west, from north to south—we hope to see these associations of the profession multiplied, till every county in every State shall possess one—as the common centre of attraction for all the neighborhood physicians, where the “feast of reason and flow of soul” shall mingle with the nigher banquet of scientific truth; and from which shall issue a light to illuminate all the region around. From each local society one delegate for every ten members may be sent to the National Medical Association—let none fail in attending to this privilege, but be instant in the selection of the proper delegate, or delegates, to represent the interests of our common profession, in the particular locality of each of these associations.

The Medical Schools of the United States have increased very rapidly within a few years. Some excellent men look upon this rapid augmentation of Medical Schools as fraught with disastrous consequences to the highest interests of the profession. We cannot agree in this ominous foreboding—in this conscientious alarm at the quick process of their multiplication.

On the contrary, present good redounds from this source, and great future advantages will flow from their establishment. Four present benefits arise from the creation of Schools of Medicine in various parts of our country. In the first place, regular and properly organized schools of medicine repress quackery. By a regular Medical School we mean one that professes to teach the science and art of curing diseases, as the principles of the

science are understood, and the measures of the art are employed, among all christian, civilized, and refined people. And by a properly organized School is intended one which, in a proper location, has the common number of Chairs, teaching all the important branches, and whose requisitions for graduation are the same as obtain in all respectable institutions.

It is objected to the multiplication of Medical Schools, that they furnish such facilities and hold out such inducements, as to tempt young men, with insufficient preparation to enter upon the study of Medicine, and that by granting diplomas upon inadequate proofs of acquirements in medicine, they degrade the whole profession. The objector has never, perhaps, reflected, because he may not be familiar with the real condition of things, that were there no regular medical schools, irregular practitioners would increase more rapidly than they do at present, and that it is best to throw into the market a genuine article, of even inferior value, than to allow an altogether spurious one to take its place. As to the temptation given young men to induce them to solicit the doctorate, which, it is contended, our Medical Schools are derelict in, one answer is sufficient to show the fallacy of the objection. Responsibility, however slight in its exactions, is preferable to irresponsibility in any shape or degree. Suppose there were but four or five Medical Schools in our country, instead of thirty seven, the actual number at present. With the rapidly increasing population of the United States, it is apparent that these five or six, or even twice five or six, would be totally inadequate to supply annually the proper number, of physicians for our country.

But there is another advantage derived from the multiplication of medical schools entirely pretermitted by our objector. In this matter, as in all other departments of human life, a gradation will be observed. The older or more celebrated, institutions will attract the largest number of students; even some of the students who attend one course at the less celebrated schools, will resort at their second session of lectures, to the more renowned seats of instruction. Thus, whilst the less established schools are patronised to a sufficient extent to keep them afloat on the tide, those of more celebrity will maintain their "high and palmy state."

Again, the number of our schools of medicine has already awakened, and will keep alive, a generous spirit of emulation. This emulous, and stirring spirit of competition provokes to greater exertion in teaching, leads to a more careful selection of professors, and eminently conduces to a more liberal collection of apparatus, and of museums, by which the lectures delivered shall be illustrated and enforced. Already are these beneficial results witnessed, and with the march of time they will go on to develop their force and brilliancy with accumulated activity. This generous spirit of emulation has very noticeably promoted medical literature in our country. This encouraging sign of the times we shall more particularly notice.

A still additional auspicious influence exercised by our medical schools is the direct bearing they have in harmonizing the profession, in all its high aims, and ulterior designs of improvement. This effect, by a natural and very operative principle, will follow from similarity of pursuit, and an ardent breathing after the same grand and glorious ends. If our medical schools are thus united in the holy brotherhood of science and humanity, they will send down, through all ranks of the profession the same noble aspirations by which they are animated, in reaching after higher manifestations of excellence, and in maintaining a liberal union with each other in all the great purposes of their endowment.

The future or more remote results of this multiplication of schools of medical education, will be realized by young aspirants, who may hereafter devote themselves to the study of medicine. A hope, an aspiration, a determination, to become a teacher of medicine, will actuate many young

men, and impel them to a more thorough preliminary education, as well as to a more protracted course of medical instruction. Open wide the door of advancement; present the prizes of honor and reputation, and emolument, to our young medical aspirants, and you call up talent and industry, and ambition, from various portions of the land; thus genius will emerge from its obscurity, and deck itself with trophies won from nature's mysteries, and subjecting the contributions of science to the accomplishment of the ultimate objects of all professional efforts—the happiness of our race, the profession will arise superior to the petty assaults of its detractors, and vindicate its character from all the aspersions of ignorance.

Another most inviting, and cheering omen of the times is the rapid augmentation of medical literature. At this period, there are seventeen periodicals devoted to Medical Science, which issue from the American press, in weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly or half-yearly numbers, and of these, twelve emanate from the profession in the United States. The five foreign Medical Journals which are reprinted, receive extensive patronage. Besides these valuable contributions to medical literature, we have elaborate works of great merit, circulated throughout every quarter of our country; these in great part are derived from Europe, but there are some of a high order of excellence, which come from distinguished physicians in the United States.

A very great and wide spread improvement has been exhibited in our profession, within a few years, in this respect. The best authors on Anatomy, Physiology, Chemistry, Materia Medica, Surgery, Obstetrics, and the practice of Medicine, have met with a ready and extensive sale. And our Medical Schools have greatly contributed to this beneficial change, by the common custom which obtains of directly recommending to the students to procure, and carefully peruse, the best authors on the several and separate branches taught by the different Chairs. And moved by the impulses of an honorable emulation, some of our schools have taken extraordinary pains to publish Medical Journals, in which the most recent and approved authorities in medicine are often brought before their readers, in the way of analysis and commendation. These Medical Journals, issued from Charleston, from New Orleans, from St. Louis, from Memphis, from Louisville, from Cincinnati, from Buffalo, and the principal Cities of the east, furnish valuable vital statistics, and communicate other local matters of medical intelligence, not derivable from any other quarter. Besides, medical authorship, thus incited to effort, will, *vires acquirit eundo*, pass beyond the circumscribed boundary of journalism, and exhibit its powers, and pour fourth its fertilizing stream in a more enduring channel of communication. There now live, and the majority of them at present teach by oral instruction the science of medicine, authors in this country, whose names have gone abroad over the civilized world, and whose writings are imperishably embalmed in the medical mind of all countries.

A particular enumeration of them we shall not attempt, but there are a few which we will give: Warren, Holmes, Bigelow, Mott, Paine, Beck, Lee, Chapman, Horner, Griffith, Bell, Metcalfe, Meigs, Condie, Hare, Gibson, Gerhard, Wood, Dunglison, Hays, Caldwell, Bartlett, Harrison of New Orleans, Gross, Dickson, and other able and distinguished men, have won a diffused reputation by the noble achievements of their pen. Long may these illustrious sons of Medicine live to enjoy their fame, and still wider to spread the glory of American medicine!

And now, Gentlemen, what special suggestions are awakened in our minds by this statement of the condition and prospects of the profession in our country? The first suggestion prompted is this, that there is an onward and upward movement among us. The second is, that this onward, upward movement is kept alive by agitation. And the third sug-

gestion excited is, that this agitation will not cease in its action, till medicine advances to its culminating point, amid the bright galaxy of sciences which shed their undying glory on our world. Yes! the spirit of improvement is abroad: it walks the earth, with a ceaseless, noiseless, unwearied tread;—it has entered the medical profession, and now agitates us with warm hopes, and urgent impulses. Progress—progress—progress, is written upon our banners:—philosophy inspires us to move on;—humanity marshals us on;—the genius of emulation breathes through our ranks—and over us bends the bright arch bedecked with the glowing lights of history—whilst the voice of heaven is heard, encouraging each genuine: Son of the order to conquest.

Ever keep alive in your bosom this spirit of improvement, and of progress. Cease not to be agitated with a restless, unconquerable desire for further advances in your profession. Remember that there are two kinds of agitation. There is the agitation of a personal discontent—the result of a vague, extravagant expectation of sudden success in the profession; this is in great part engendered by vain ideas of merit, operating on an inexperienced, morbidly sensitive mind. This species of agitation is sad, is fruitless of good, and is fraught with unhappy results to its victim. It darkens the scene of duty around a man's daily path:—Shuts out the light of hope, when any transient cloud of disappointment passes over the mind; infuses the bitterness of a querulous spirit into the cup of life; and sinks into abjectness and inertness the intellectual and moral faculties. But the agitation of progress is full of vivid force; it moves as an angel of health on the still waters within; wakens up the energies of the interior life, kindles those fires which urge the soul to action, to adventure, to lofty achievement, and amidst the mutabilities and uncertainties, the brevity and frailty of mortal existence, leads man on to the consummation of those deeds of virtue, and of renown, which live emblazoned on the roll of immortality.

In our profession, this agitation of progress is opposed to the agitation of personal disquietude. The one is open, generous, expansive; replete with sympathy for all improvements in medicine: sends the mind forth in quest of discoveries in science; induces the man who possesses it to seek for the communion of kindred spirits, and for a free participation in all the progressive movements of the age.

The other kind of agitation is filled with repining at the sad lot of the physician, is selfish in its plans and employments, and treats with contemptuous disregard, if not with bitter sneer, all the suggestions and attempts of others for the improvement of medical science.

The agitation of progress enlarges, liberalize, brightens the soul: the agitation of personal dissatisfaction dwarfs, perverts, and darkens the faculties;—the one moves through a wide territory, in an atmosphere of light, and joy, and activity; the other grovels in a dim and circumscribed circle of ignoble aims and selfish ends: the one realizes the truth of the poet's thought,

"We live in deeds, not years. He most lives,  
Who thinks most—feels the noblest—acts the best."

The other resembles,

"Ocean into tempest tost,  
To waft a feather, or to drown a fly."

The physician, who is controlled by the agitation of personal discontent disparages the profession in the eye of the public,—like Caliban, he moves in growling reluctance to the performance of his duties, and unceasingly utters his maledictions upon his fate:—but the physician whose soul is inspired by the generous ardour of professional progress, reflects credit

and honor upon his calling, and by a noble impersonation of professional zeal and industry, sustains the character of medicine in all its varied disclosures of scientific research, therapeutic skill and philanthropic power.

Our profession needs more of this lifegiving, awakening, enkindling spirit of progress—let us nurture it, till we all feel—“*Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.*”

“One mighty soul  
Inspires and feeds and animates the whole;  
This active mind, infus’d though all the space,  
Unites and mingles with the mighty mass.”

This agitation, though impulsive to high efforts of mind, is yet a sound, discriminating power. It delights not in pulling down, but in building up. Does not urge on the changes, which the times demand with reckless haste, but with steady hand removes obstructions, and opens a way that facilitates the access, and shorten’s the route to the temple of Medical Science. Nor does this healthful spirit of progress boast itself of the great things accomplished by its agency, but with the modesty that ever becomes true science, takes no congratulations to itself for the victories won, but looks forward to more signal discoveries of truth, and is constantly cheered with assurances that yet higher, and richer, and more glorious displays of nature’s wonders, and of the developments of human skill, will be revealed to the longing, enraptured eye of philosophic curiosity.

Gentlemen, we confidently believe that your minds sympathise in the great events now in progress in the medical profession,—that our representation has kindled within you—if already you were not in possession of it—a portion of this spirit of improvement which, with such moving, stirring agitation, is felt in quick vibration and onward motion, throughout the profession. Led on by the desire to fit yourselves for the practice of a responsible avocation, you have assembled here to listen to our prelections, witness our demonstrations, and avail yourselves of the facilities and opportunities presented in our hospital, for the acquirement of a sound practical knowledge of the science and art of preventing, mitigating, and curing, the numerous maladies which afflict mankind.

Dedicate yourselves in singleness of purpose, to this good work; gather up, in one earnest collectedness of mind, your energies to the accomplishment of the enterprise in hand; and let not the future find you repentant over lost time, nor heaven frown in deserved retribution upon—nor mourning friends upbraid you—when death seizes the sick consigned to your charge. Be instant in season to catch the rising chances of professional knowledge; assiduously wait upon the tide as it flows; and with firm reliance upon your own manly arm, plunge your bark into the stream. It waits for you, the fountain is now at hand, the waters are rising; see, they burst up on every side,—the channel is free! will you not take to your oars, and push forward your successful career? The heavens above smile in approving serenity, the bright stars are reflected in the crystal stream, the winds are filling the sails with a prosperous breeze: have you the compass and the chart ready, the rudder manned, the sails all set, the vessel trim, the timbers sound, and all hands on board? May heaven give you a prosperous voyage, and a safe anchorage in the desired haven of professional knowledge; there may you receive the greetings of friends, and be gladdened with the retrospect of the hours here dedicated to the study of a noble and beneficent profession.